



Tariffs, Trump and Northern Ireland

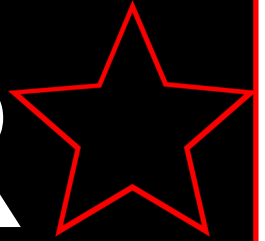


Sudan—the forgotten conflict?



Attack on Trans Women an Attack on Us All

# BLACK STAR



## NI WATER TAX



## WHAT'S IN THE PIPELINE?

Under the dull technical phrase of 'fiscal framework', the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee recently delivered its report recommending a way for the North to fund public services. The Committee includes 13 no-mark Westminster MPs, three of whom (Sorcha Eastwood, Claire Hanna and Gavin Robinson), are from here. It was tasked with coming up with ideas of investigating levels of need in Northern Ireland and finding solutions beyond the block grant that Stormont receives each year to carve up across its devolved ministries. A section of the mass media has been pushing for the re-introduction of domestic water tax, which Stormont tried and failed to bring in because of mass working class opposition in the early 2000s. Naturally, all parties to the plan later said they'd always been opposed to it and continue to be fearful of the public response. Now the sneaky bastards are trying their new tactic of seeking further powers from Westminster to overhaul public services under the guise of 'reform' which they can then blame on others. They have obtained the services of Gerry Holtham, partner of a London-based Hedge Fund management company called Cadwyn Capital, who did work for the Welsh assembly on how to raise revenue and will now turn his attention to the wee North. Delay, deny, depose?

# Tariffs, trade and Northern Ireland



Speaking recently on the BBC, the Belfast Chamber of Commerce chief executive, Clare Guinness, besides calling very directly for the introduction of water taxes with immediate effect, touted the idea that the North was in a perfect position to capitalise on the current Trump tariffs war on the working class (both as manufacturers and consumers). The hope of these bastards and their allies in Stormont, is that some sort of negotiation might avoid the looming retaliatory tariffs expected at some stage from the EU, which as the North is still part of that club, means joining in.

Obviously, the DUP are shouting loudest about being still tied to Europe but they are likely to be joined by Sinn Féin in this, both to provide a united front for the Yanks and to claim special treatment, though this may depend on the extent to which the Republic of Ireland decide to resist potential EU tariffs in response to Trump. Here the slavish and sycophantic alignment with American capitalism comes across clearest as both the British and Irish states claim the specialist special relationship over whatever European capitalism has to offer.

In the meantime, it is workers that will find themselves in the maw of this chicanery and back-dealing, sold as usual to the lowest bidder. That, of course, has been part of the so-called 'peace dividend' here for thirty years now as we, the working

class, are bartered for a scintilla of American engagement with our parochial sectarian squabbles.

## *A Place Apart?*

That inflated sense of importance borne of the conflict here still has resonance for those keen to try and milk it. This has grown since Brexit and the out again, in again nature of the North's place in the EU, besides forming into predictable sectarian battle lines, has pushed the idea of this part of the world as a middle place or crossroads where American and European capital can meet and do business. Like a shite Switzerland without the chocolate and cuckoo clocks. What that means in reality is that the case is further made for the North to become some sort of free trade zone in the longer run, truly a place apart for workers.

Not that this particularly worries the trade union bosses of NIC-ICTU, who are still holding out for a seat at the Stormont executive table, social partnership style. However, it seems likely that the predicted shake-up in the funding of public services here (see front page), may mean public sector pay bargaining could move to three or four year plans paid for by domestic water charges and higher rates hikes. In that event, it will be at the whim of whichever bigot is serving as finance minister at the time to spell out how they've 'delivered' for workers.

Before all that though, there are the pressing demands of businesses here, again supported by all the main Stormont parties, to see compensation to off-set the impact of National Insurance contribution increases. No-one ever seems to suggest that employers have a choice to absorb the costs of paying their workers more and take a hit to their profits. Instead, we hear the same cry as is made when it comes to responding to tariffs or making up for shortfalls in money from Westminster. Whether it's called the 'Duty Reimbursement Scheme' or 'Barnett Consequential mitigations', the same shite applies, kickbacks for politicians and their cronies in business.

For example, there have been renewed calls recently from those on the hill to close the competitive gap between businesses here and south of the border by pushing for lower corporation taxes. For nationalists, this can be dressed up as

applying an all-Ireland dynamic to help multinationals continue to fleece our class whilst for unionists, it's about not allowing the Free State an inch of neo-liberal economic advantage over the North.

It's not a surprise that everything, no matter how global, has to be about this wee fragment of western Europe and its endemic sectarian politics, but the idea that a conflict that ended over thirty years ago still has leverage is laughable. Equally derisory is the notion that someone like JD Vance, with his 'Scotch-Irish' roots, or some other fucker in Trump's cabinet of sex offenders and sociopaths with a genetic cum stain that can be traced back here gives a flying fuck about us. The tariffs policy devised by Trump and his lackeys is about the nationalist pipe dream of turning back the tide of history because western businesses took flight decades ago for the so-called global south when they couldn't defeat the working class in their own countries. As manufacturing moved east, the US and Europe developed to a large extent into service sector economies under both conservative and social democratic parties, and now some think (and try to sell to the working class they took the jobs away from in the first place), that they can now get them back. That is a complete mirage and sadly, too many ordinary working class Americans have bought it in the arena of extremely limited political choices and general hopelessness.

The reality for the working class in the US, Europe or anywhere else in the world, is that tariffs will destroy jobs and livelihoods, not create them. For the founders of the Irish Free State, they were an indispensable prop to their so-called 'independence', a process that intensified under de Valera, whilst in the North, that form of economic nationalism was deemed unnecessary as Northern Ireland was still buoyed by British imperial markets. Neither strategy to manage capitalism worked of course, and unemployment and emigration increased. That too is what can be expected from this new American protectionism, from its unhappy recipients and their strategies to resist or manage it.





# SUDAN - A FORGOTTEN CONFLICT?



People are rightly outraged about the genocide in Palestine, which shows no sign of ending. Official figures suggest over 50,000 killed so far, a figure that could be considerably higher with about 1.9 million Palestinians displaced by the actions of the Israeli government. And yet, in Sudan over a roughly similar period, some 8.6 million people have been internally displaced and over 150,000 have been killed. Naturally, nationalist and ethno-religious conflicts cannot be reduced to mere numbers, but it is equally clear that Sudan has had nothing approaching the concern, anger and solidarity which has been extended to Palestine. The reasons for this are probably less important than what can be done to rectify it and there certainly needs to be a greater global effort in support of those in Sudan.

This is even more the case for anarchists because of the presence and anti-war activism of the Sudanese anarchists. They

have been to the fore in helping people resist both the Sudanese military and the Rapid Support Forces and provide them with support and mutual aid.

Founded in 2017 as the Anarchist Federation, the Sudanese anarchists played a significant role in the December revolution of 2018 which led to the fall of the Omar al-Bashir regime and his replacement, General Ibn Auf. They remain active and are in fairly regular contact with our comrades in the French CNT-AIT, but the situation is dire and worsening. The latest news was an attack several days ago on the largest camp for displaced people at Zamzam. Home to 700,000 refugees south-west of Khartoum, it was attacked with land and air assaults by the RSF resulting in many deaths and tens of thousands fleeing in all directions. We send greetings of solidarity to our comrades in Sudan, you are not forgotten.

## Meanwhile... in Ballymena



Like something out of an episode of 'Breaking Bad' was how a Ballymena magistrate described the seizure by the cops of a methamphetamine 'lab' the other week in Queen Street. Originally I thought that'll be the Railway (pub that is host to many of the town's Rangers fans), but alas naw, it was some other geezer with Class As, Bs and Cs in addition to hazmat suits and oxygen masks. A long holiday is probably in the offing for the poor entrepreneurial bastard, who really should have gone down the route of getting a job over in the industrial estate with CIGA Healthcare and he could have been making drugs to his heart's content. Double standards, eh? Not that things look particularly bright for them. Trump's tariffs are likely to hit pharmaceutical manufacturers here as in the Republic at some point, and CIGA's recent deals to supply Walmart could be in some jeopardy. Maybe the black market is the way to go for anyone trying to break into American markets, the wee Ballymena Breaking Bad guy could probably take a class for Ballymena Chamber of Commerce o'er in the Galgorm if he wasn't currently on remand in Maghaberry.



# Attack on Trans Women an Attack on Us All



**On Saturday 19th April tens of thousands took to the streets across Britain to protest the Supreme Court decision and support trans women.**

The UK Supreme Court decision of 16th April is a victory for bigotry and reaction. Those who believe that this represents a victory for women or for feminism are the stooges of a right-wing backlash that will not be content with rolling back on the hard fought for rights gained by trans people.

The Court ruled that the terms “woman” and “sex” in the 2010 Equality Act “refer to a biological woman and biological sex”. Britain’s equalities watchdog says the ruling means trans women cannot use single-sex female toilets, changing rooms or compete in women’s sports.

In fact many Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists have more than just their reductive view of how women should be

defined in common with their far-right allies. Jess Gill, tweeted “We’ve won the victory against trans ideology” in celebration of the Supreme Court decision and followed up with the blatantly racist “Now, it’s essential that the gender critical community speaks up about the dangers of mass immigration for women.” These words could have been uttered by any amount of far-right misogynists - from Trump, Andrew Tate through Tommy Robinson to the Conor McGregor supporting fuckers of the Irish far-right.

This is an attack that follows last December’s implementation of an indefinite ban on puberty blockers to under 18s in Northern Ireland. An attack

that followed suit with the rest of the UK in the wake of the much criticised Cass Review.

These attacks are not simply taking place here. The Trump administration has carried out a full-scale attack on trans people, restricting access to healthcare and excluding trans people from public life and which includes a definition of sex as defined by “biological characteristics” at birth.

Gender critical feminists, like their fascist comrades, claim to be defending women. The rolling back of recognition and protection for trans people, particularly trans women, will increase the levels of violence trans women and all women are exposed to. These attacks will make all women more rather than less open to misogynist attack and violence.

Across the globe political ‘leaders’ are whipping up fears of ‘gender ideology’ to attack LGBTQ+ communities and reinforce their authoritarian and nationalist regimes. This is happening in Indonesia, Hungary, Russia, Uganda, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Kenya, Ghana, Poland, Colombia, Brazil, the UK and the USA. This list is far from exhaustive. The backlash against the trans community has not come out of nowhere. While it was the Vatican that coined the phrase ‘gender ideology’ US-based organisations linked to what has been called the ‘anti-gender ideology’ movement have received billions of dollars in funding and spent over \$1billion between 2008 and 2017 promoting their reactionary anti-trans agenda.

Organise! refuse to play the bosses game of scapegoating the more vulnerable in our society and stand in solidarity with trans people and with women in the face of a system that talks about protection but which is based itself on the perpetuation of violence. We are not naïve enough to call on the state to protect us - as we can see any rights won from the system can be rolled back. We must stand together to protect each other and refuse to accept divisions being driven into the working-class. These divisions are designed to distract and weaken us while the rich get richer and regimes get more authoritarian.



# Billionaires In Space



Sickeningly millionaires and billionaires playing at the edge of the atmosphere has been welcomed as a great leap forward for feminism. The 6 woman 'crew', most of whom paid millions for their short trip to the very near edge of space, got great views of the planet and 4 minutes of weightlessness. Headlines declared that Katy Perry had floated upside down in

space. As they looked down on us from above bombs reigned down on Gaza, war raged on in Ukraine, Sudan, Syria, Myanmar, Maghreb and Yemen.

Europe has just had its hottest year on record with flooding, wildfires and the highest mass loss of glacier ice yet. Floods have cost at least 335 lives and an

estimated 42,000 were impacted by wildfires. That is just Europe! Crop failures are killing people in sub-Saharan Africa. Flooding in Pakistan and Afghanistan have reached unprecedented levels. Globally the gap between rich and poor is at its most extreme and in the face of economic chaos there are more billionaires than ever. That we are expected to applaud this (or any) billionaires vanity project is fucking obscene.

Make no mistake, climate change is a class issue with low-income communities, and the poor of 'developing' countries, bearing the brunt of disaster after disaster. Unlike the wealthy whom we are expected to admire, the poor cannot escape the consequences of war or environmental disaster. We cannot afford to relocate let alone waste billions in resources on a trip to space.

Rather than Katy and her fellow space tourists getting turned on their heads by a momentary lack of gravity its time we turned their whole world upside down.

# Protests Hit Indonesia



From 20th March students, anarchists and other anti-authority groups held simultaneous demonstrations in cities across Indonesia in response to the passing of the National Armed Forces Law. This legislation allows the military a greater role in Indonesia's government.

Clashes took place on the 25th of March between protestors and law enforcement in Surabaya with protestors throwing rocks, sticks and Molotov cocktails at police. Another demonstration took place in Jakarta on 26th March.

Source PPAS-IWA Surabaya.

# Radical Film Network shorts At the (A) Centre



On Thursday 1st May to celebrate May Day the (A) Centre in Belfast, as part of the Radical Film Network's Workers Rights screenings at multiple locations, will be screening a number of short films selected from a list compiled by the RFN.

"Selecting the shorts for our screening from the 19 film list compiled by the RFN wasn't easy" said a spokesperson for the (A) Centre "all the films short-listed by the RFN were excellent".

We'd encourage everyone to get along to see what is on offer. The selected films represent a wide range of countries, styles, and approaches to the theme of workers' rights. This series of short films and one trailer are as follows:

*Manifestoon* (1995), Jesse Drew, USA: an experimental cartoon version of the Communist Manifesto.

*Le casa che eravamo, The houses we were* (2018), Arianna Lodesetero, Italy: Among emperors and insolents, slum dwellers and speculators, women at war and grey cruel cities march to their own step in an archival, polyphonic and entangled demonstration into the arms of the charitable low-income housing institute.

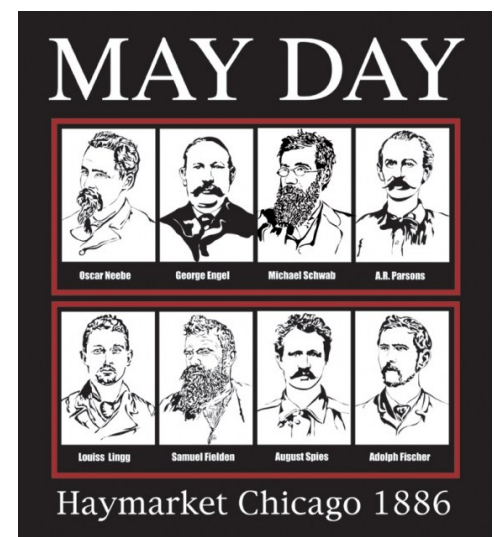
*Republic*, (2023), Rosie Reed Hillman, UK: as the washing machine whirs, three women care for their young children repeating actions they carry out each day. An immersive and acutely observed insight into the 'private' sphere and women's everyday labour.

*#Precarity Story*, 2020, Lorena Cervera, UK/Spain: tells the story of Isabel, a cleaner, hourly-paid teacher and researcher at the same British university. Her story stands as an example of the

increasing casualisation of university labour and its human consequences, Filmed during the 2018-2020 UK higher education strikes, this documentary exposes the little-known reality of the academic precariat and fuels the ongoing debate on the effects of neoliberal policies in British higher education.

*Studs Terkel Remembers: the Haymarket Affair* (2000), John de Graaf, Mirko Popadic, and Alan Harris Stein, USA: Portions of this video were shot for *Rocking the Boat*, a documentary on the labour movement. Today we honour the 139th anniversary of the Haymarket Affair, an important moment in labour history and the origin event to May Day, or International Workers' Day. This event celebrated annually around the world actually has its roots in Chicago.

Starting May 1, 1886, Unions across the United States began a general strike in support of the 8-hour workday. On May 3, police in Chicago shot into a crowd and killed several workers striking at the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company Plant. In response, anarchists and workers gathered on May 4 at Haymarket Square for another day of demonstrations. Upon the arrival of police, an unidentified person threw a bomb, inciting the police to pull their firearms against the crowd. Several policemen and workers were killed, and there was immediate public backlash against the "riot" and the labour movement. The leaders of the event, all anarchists, were defended unsuccessfully against charges of murder and inciting violence by the great Clarence Darrow. Four of them were hanged.





# OBITUARY—JOHN COUZIN

Veteran Glasgow anarchist militant and propagandist, John Couzin, died on 11 March 2025, he was a remarkable man with a keen intellect and an absolutely unquenchable thirst for justice, freedom and equality to the very end of his long life at the age of 90.



John was born in 1934 to a miner and factory worker in the 'Good and the Bad', as Garngad in the north of Glasgow was formerly known. His family later moved to nearby Balornock and after wartime evacuation as a child, he started an engineering apprenticeship at Fairfield's shipyard in Govan on Clydeside, an experience which would have a profound affect on him. Like another old Glasgow anarchist, Bobby Lynn (1924-2006), who worked in Yarrow's in Scotstoun on the other side of the River Clyde, Fairfield's shipyard had a vibrant working class culture with regular and vocal debates between Labourites, Communists and Anarchists that provided an excellent educational environment to develop his political ideas.



I knew John for many years and exchanged letters and emails with him long before I actually met him. He went on to work in many different jobs and environments, travelled a great deal and was always a firm friend and comrade to all who knew him. He produced the *Anarchist Critic* newsheet, wrote his *Radical Glasgow* book, which went into several editions and celebrated the working class history of the city with the anarchists finally given a central rather than marginal role as in so much Scottish and British labour history. The history and heritage of anarchism and its place in Glasgow's past was especially dear to his heart, and his work for the Spirit of Revolt archive will live on and serve as an important part of his legacy, as will strugglepedia, his poetry as published by his own Voline Press, and the alternative Glasgow

May Day events he helped bring back to Glasgow Green.

John always reminded me of the older Glasgow anarchist, Willie McDougall (1894-1981), who although not always a member of an anarchist organisation throughout his equally long life, was like John, a tireless propagator of anarchist ideas who produced and handed out his own libertarian socialist newsletters under different titles over the years. He was a truly remarkable man and one of a kind as well as a generation that will not be seen again. He will be dearly missed by all his comrades on Clydeside and farther afield and not least by his family and partner, Stasia. MÓC.

## LIBERTARIAN SPRING 2025 FRIDAY 16TH MAY - SATURDAY 17TH MAY

Friday 7.00pm *In Defence of the CNT-AIT*

Saturday 2.00pm *International Anarcho-Syndicalism: the IWA*

Saturday 3.00pm *An introduction to Organise!*

Saturday 5.00pm Screening: *Where They Are Not Given They Are Taken*

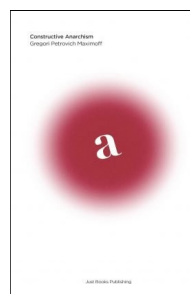
Saturday 6.30pm on social with music & refreshments  
@ the (A) Centre  
6 Wellington Court  
Belfast



## Just Books Publishing



Just Books Publishing, set up by the Just Books Collective, has so far published its first two titles.



The first is a reprint of Gregori Maximoff's *Constructive Anarchism*, to mark the 100th year of existence of the International Workers Association (IWA) the Anarcho-Syndicalist

international founded in Berlin in 1922.

isbn 9781739723705

£7.99



The second title, now with a new cover, is Nick Heath's *The Idea. Anarchist Communism: Past, Present and Future* - a welcome and new comprehensive work on anarchist

communism, this book seeks to rehabilitate the current of anarchist-communism. To make it better known and understood.

...a good substantial book, and much needed. Lucidly written, it provides a rich brew of engaging discussions of the 'Idea' (anarchist communism as a political philosophy), interesting vignettes of many individual anarchists, and a great historical account of the many anarchist communist organisations over the past 150 years... (Brian Morris on *The Idea*)

isbn 9781739723712

£15.00

# Get Involved: Help Build A Working Class Alternative.



Organise! is an anarcho-syndicalist group in Ireland which is affiliated to the International Worker's Association as 'friends of' section. We take inspiration from the self directed struggles of working-class people, and particularly the history and tradition of struggle epitomised by the IWA - the anarcho-syndicalist international. Our history goes back to the original formation of Organise! by the Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups in 1985. We are a small, but growing, group of ordinary working class people who are fed up with being fucked about by the profit system, fed up with seeing our communities and workplaces torn apart by racism, patriarchy, nationalism and sectarianism, and sick of a greedy few getting rich off everyone else's backs.

We are actively working to promote solidarity in opposition to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression and hierarchy. The way we organise reflects the free society we want to create: one based on voluntary association, democratic participation and self-management.

Our members are workers, claimants, students, migrants, unemployed and other working-class people committed to building a libertarian communist union movement actively opposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation.

We want to improve everyday conditions for ourselves and other working class people, but we also struggle for the revolutionary transformation that can create a free and equal society, one based on mutual aid and co-operation. Sound crazy? Maybe it does, but in an era in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism the continuation of the present system is even crazier...

The current system isn't working – ill-health, stress and overwork



affect more and more people while others are flung on the dole; for increasing amounts of workers it is precarity, zero hours contracts and the stress of being unable to plan or budget our lives; we live in a world of plentiful resources yet millions starve; some people make vast fortunes just because they own companies, land, property or natural resources, but those of us who create the wealth, work the land and build the properties are left struggling to survive; politicians tell us there's no money – not for wages, benefits or local amenities, but there's always plenty for war; both locally and globally the gap between the richest and the poorest sections of society has never been so great; instead of a war on poverty they've got a war on 'benefit fraud', while the same system that creates war, poverty and environmental destruction stigmatises, imprisons and deports the resultant refugees.

We don't think these things are inevitable or coincidental, we think they are related to capitalism – an economic system defined by wage slavery and the accumulation of profit out of other people's work. So we support all workers against their bosses in demanding higher wages and better conditions. We try to intervene practically to support workers engaged in disputes and are also active in our own workplaces and communities. Not only against exploitation but against the multiple oppressions faced by members of the working class in all our diversity.

But it's not just a question of trying to struggle by in a world of exploitation and oppression; we look to a future where workers control production and society in their own interests. And unlike some people who claim to oppose capitalism, we don't want to be a new set of leaders and we refuse to be led by anyone else. We advocate direct democracy in the workplace and through the commune in our communities – working in federation to ensure that the needs of all are met and that no-one is ever again in a position to oppress or exploit another human being.

If you are interested in these ideas, we'd encourage you to explore our website and consider getting involved.

We currently have members in Belfast, Cork, Derry, Dublin, Lisburn, Monaghan, Newry, Newtownabbey and Portadown and are building the organisation on the basis of active involvement and participation. We have a new Local in Formation in South Ulster. We aren't interested in meaningless 'paper' membership so you can't join by filling in an online form and bunging us a few quid. Every member is an active member.

To talk to us about joining get the ball rolling, check out our website at <https://organiseanarchistsireland.com> and send an email to: [organiseasi@gmail.com](mailto:organiseasi@gmail.com)

